

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for consumer product promotion through the Internet, comprising:
 - a. providing a plurality of packages each containing a consumer product identified by a universal product code to at least one consumer;
 - b. establishing a package identification number having a predetermined format for each package, wherein the package identification numbers for the plurality of packages form a group of package identification numbers;
 - c. storing the package identification number for each package in a first database;
 - d. storing establishing a cross-reference between the group of package identification numbers and the universal product code;;
 - e. saving the cross-reference between the group of package identification numbers and the universal product code in the first database;
 - f. employing a Web browser program to run a Web site that offers an Internet game, wherein the Web site is electronically coupled to the first database;
 - g. permitting access to the Internet game by the at least one consumer to play the Internet game upon presentation of a package identification number having the predetermined format over the Internet only if the package identification number has not been presented yet; and
 - h. denying access to the Internet game by the at least one consumer to play the Internet game upon presentation of a package identification number having the predetermined over the Internet if the package identification number has been presented.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising steps of:
 - a. employing the Web browser program to allow the at least one consumer to interactively play the Internet game once the access to the Internet game is granted; and
 - b. rewarding the at least one consumer according to the outcome of the Internet game with one or more packages of the consumer product, one or more packages of other consumer products, or one or more opportunities to play the Internet game.

3. The method of claim 1, further comprising steps of:
 - a. employing the Web browser program to allow the consumer to select another Internet-related activity other than the Internet game once the access to the Internet game is denied; and
 - b. rewarding the consumer according to the outcome of the Internet-related activity with one or more packages of the consumer product, one or more packages of other consumer products, or one or more opportunities to play the Internet game.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of permitting access to the Web site further comprises the steps of:
 - a. determining if the format of the package identification number for a package containing the consumer product matches the predetermined format;
 - b. determining if the package identification number exists in the first database when the format of the package identification number for a package containing the consumer product matches the predetermined format;

- c. determining if the package identification number exists in a second database when the package identification number exists in the first database;
 - d. permitting access to the Internet game by the at least one consumer if the package identification number does not exist in the second database; and
 - e. storing the package identification number in the database.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein the package identification number is generated by a random number generator.
 6. The method of claim 5, wherein the format of the package identification number is a sequence of randomly arranged Arabic numerals.
 7. The method of claim 5, wherein the length of the package identification number is no less than six (6) digits.
 8. The method of claim 1, wherein the package identification number is printed on the package and accessible by the at least one consumer.
 9. The method of claim 1, wherein the package identification number is printed on a printing medium that is associated with the package.
 10. The method of claim 9, wherein the printing medium includes a sticker or a label.
 11. The method of claim 1, wherein the consumer product is popcorn and the package containing popcorn is microwaveable.

12. The method of claim 1, further comprising a step of counting the number of accesses to the Web site for the consumer product from the cross-reference between the group of package identification numbers and the universal product code.
13. A method for consumer product promotion through the Internet, comprising:
 - a. providing a package containing a consumer product identified by a universal product code to a consumer;
 - b. establishing a package identification number having a format for the package;
 - c. employing a Web browser program to run a Web site that offers an Internet game; and
 - d. permitting access to the Internet game by the consumer to play the Internet game upon presentation of the package identification number over the Internet when the package identification number satisfies the following two conditions:
 - (i) the format of the package identification number matches a predetermined format; and
 - (ii) the package identification number has not been presented yet.
14. The method of claim 13, further comprising steps of:
 - a. employing the Web browser program to allow the consumer to interactively play the Internet game once the access is granted; and

- b. rewarding the consumer according to the outcome of the Internet game with one or more packages of the consumer product, one or more packages of other consumer products, or one or more opportunities to lay the Internet game.
15. The method of claim 13, further comprising the step of denying access to the Internet game by the consumer to play the Internet game upon presentation of the package identification number over the Internet when the package identification number satisfies at least one of the following two conditions:
- (i) the format of the package identification number is not in match with the predetermined format; and
 - (ii) the package identification number has been presented.
16. The method of claim 15, further comprising steps of:
- a. employing the Web browser program to allow the consumer to select another Internet-related activity other than the Internet game once the access is denied; and
 - b. rewarding the consumer according to the outcome of the Internet-related activity with one or more packages of the consumer product, one or more packages of other consumer products, or one or more opportunities to play the Internet game.
17. The method of claim 13, wherein the step of permitting access to the Internet game further comprises the steps of:
- a. determining if the format of the package identification number for a package containing the consumer product matches a predetermined format;

- b. determining if the package identification number has been present in the database when the format of the package identification number for a package containing the consumer product matches the predetermined format;
 - c. permitting access to the Web site by the at least one consumer if the package identification number has not been present in the database; and
 - d. storing the package identification number in the database.
18. The method of claim 13, wherein the package identification number is generated by a random number generator.
19. The method of claim 18, wherein the format of the package identification number is a sequence of randomly arranged Arabic numerals.
20. The method of claim 18, wherein the length of the package identification number is no less than six (6) digits.
21. The method of claim 13, wherein the package identification number is printed on the package and accessible by the consumer.
22. The method of claim 13, wherein the package identification number is printed on a printing medium that is associated with the package.
23. The method of claim 22, wherein the printing medium includes a sticker or a label.
24. The method of claim 23, wherein the consumer product is popcorn and the package containing popcorn is microwaveable.

25. A system for consumer product promotion through the Internet, wherein the consumer product is identified by a universal product code and provided in a package to a consumer, comprising:
 - a. a number generator for establishing a package identification number having a format for the package;
 - b. a memory device; and
 - c. a processor coupled to the memory device and performing the following steps of:
 - (i) employing a Web browser program to run a Web site that offers an Internet game, wherein the Web site is electronically coupled to the memory device; and
 - (ii) permitting access to the Internet game by the consumer to play the Internet game upon presentation of the package identification number over the Internet when the package identification number satisfies the following two conditions:
 - (1) the format of the package identification number matches a predetermined format; and
 - (2) the package identification number has not been presented yet.

26. The system of claim 25, wherein the processor further performs the step of denying access to the Web site by the consumer to play the Internet game upon presentation of the package identification number over the Internet when the package identification number satisfies at least one of the following two conditions:
 - (1) the format of the package identification number is not in match with the predetermined format; and
 - (2) the package identification number has been presented.

27. The system of claim 25, wherein the processor further performs the steps

of:

- a. employing the Web browser program to allow the consumer to interactively play the Internet game once the access is granted; and
- b. rewarding the consumer according to the outcome of the Internet game with one or more packages of the consumer product, one or more packages of other consumer products, or one or more opportunities to play the Internet game.

28. The system of claim 26, wherein the processor further performs the steps of:

- a. employing the Web browser program to allow the consumer to select another Internet-related activity other than the Internet game once the access is denied; and
- b. rewarding the consumer according to the outcome of the Internet-related activity with one or more packages of the consumer product, one or more packages of other consumer products, or one or more opportunities to play the Internet game.

29. The system of claim 25, wherein when performing the step of permitting access to the Web site, the processor further performs the steps of:

- a. determining if the format of the package identification number for a package containing the consumer product matches the predetermined format;
- b. determining if the package identification number has been present in a database resident in the memory device when the format of the package identification number for a package containing the consumer product matches the predetermined format;
- c. permitting access to the Web site by the consumer if the package identification number has not been present in the database; and

- d. storing the package identification number in the database.
30. The system of claim 25, wherein the number generator comprises a random number generator program resident in the memory device.
 31. The system of claim 30, wherein the format of the package identification number is a sequence of randomly arranged Arabic numerals generated by the random number generator program.
 32. The system of claim 31, wherein the length of the package identification number is no less than six (6) digits.
 33. The system of claim 31, wherein the package identification number is printed on the package and accessible by the consumer.
 34. The system of claim 31, wherein the package identification number is printed on a printing medium that is associated with the package.
 35. The system of claim 34, wherein the printing medium includes a sticker or a label.
 36. The system of claim 35, wherein the consumer product is popcorn and the package containing popcorn is microwaveable.
 37. A computer program product in a computer readable medium of instructions, comprising:
 - a. instructions within the computer readable medium for running a Web site that offers an Internet game; and
 - b. instructions within the computer readable medium for permitting access to the Internet game by a user to play the Internet game upon presentation of a package identification number over the

Internet when the package identification number satisfies the following two conditions:

- (1) the format of the package identification number matches a predetermined format; and
- (2) the package identification number has not been presented yet, wherein the package identification number is associated with a package containing a consumer product identified by a universal product code.

38. The computer program product of claim 37, further comprising instructions within the computer readable medium for denying access to the Internet game by the user to play the Internet game upon presentation of the package identification number over the Internet when the package identification number satisfies at least one of the following two conditions:

- (i) the format of the package identification number is not in match with the predetermined format; and
- (ii) the package identification number has been presented.

39. The computer program product of claim 38, further comprising:

- a. instructions within the computer readable medium for allowing the user to select an Internet-related activity other than the Internet game once the access is denied; and
- b. instructions within the computer readable medium for rewarding the user according to the outcome of the Internet related activity with one or more packages of the consumer product, one or more packages of other consumer products or one or more opportunities to play the Internet game.

40. The computer program product of claim 37, further comprising:

- a. instructions within the computer readable medium for allowing

the user to interactively play the Internet game once the access is granted; and

- b. instructions within the computer readable medium for rewarding the user according to the outcome of the Internet game with one or more packages of the consumer product, one or more packages of other consumer products, or one or more opportunities to play the Internet game.